

N<sup>o</sup> 30

*The Advantages of a Learned  
and Religious Education.*

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I N A  
**S E R M O N**

Preach'd at  
St. *AUSTIN*'s Church,  
December the 6<sup>th</sup> 1705.

Before the  
Gentlemen Educated at *Eton*-Coll.

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By *ZACHARY WELLS*, M. A. Late  
Fellow of *Kings-College* in *Cambridge*, and  
Lecturer of *St. Michael Bassishaw*.

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*Publish'd at the Request of the Stewards.*

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L O N D O N,

Printed by *T. Warren*, for *Walter Kettilby*, at the  
*Bishop's-Head* in *St. Paul's Church-Yard*, 1705.

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TO MY  
Worthy Friends,

Sir Bowcher Wrey, Bart.	}	Mr. Rich. Bartholomew.
Robert Walpole, Esq;		Mr. John Cradoek.
Simon Harcourt, Esq;		Mr. John Fowns.
John Nicholas, Esq;		Mr. William Sheppard.
John Michel, Esq;		Mr. Thomas Clark.
John Ball, Esq; Treas.	}	

STEWARDS.

Gentlemen,

**W**HEN You first desir'd me to Print this Sermon, I look'd upon it as a matter of Compliment only; and therefore thought I should make You but an ill Return, if I should let Your Judgment suffer for Your Civility: But by Your repeated Requests, and Resolving to Admit of no Excuse, I conclude You think it may be of some Use.

Indeed my Intention was good, to Perswade All who have had Eton Education, to Answer the Design of It, i. e. to endeavour to be Useful in, and a Credit to their several Stations and Employments. And this is the best, nay the only way to do Honour, or express Our Gratitude to the Place,

or

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## The Epistle Dedicatory.

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or Our Instructors : And should this Discourse  
contribute to this Excellent Purpose ( which God  
grant it may ) I shall think my self ever oblig'd to  
You for Over-ruling me, as to the Publication of it.

I am

Your Faithful Servant

*Zachary Wells.*

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A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

GENTLEMEN

Educated at

EATON-COLLEGE.

St. Matth. xxii. xi. ‡

— *It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, at the Day of Judgment, than for you.*

O U R Blessed Saviour had performed many surprizing Miracles in that part of *Galilee* where his usual Residence was, particularly in *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida*, two Cities of that Region; yet neither the Innocence of his Example, nor the Authority of his Preaching (for he spake as never Man spake) nor the Number of his

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Mighty

Mighty Works, could perswade the Inhabitants of those Places to believe His Doctrine and repent of their Wickedness; wherefore our Saviour in great Indignation upbraids their Malice and Obstinacy; nay, He prefers the Case and Condition of Tyre and Sidon, two Heathenish Cities, and abominably Wicked, before *them*, who had so perversly resisted His Daily Preaching, and the Powerful Evidence of His Mighty Works, Works abundantly sufficient to convince any other People less perverse and obstinate; so that there was no ground for them at the great Day of Accounts, when the exact Judge of all the World shall not only impartially weigh the Demerit of every Man's Offences, but also mercifully allow all just Excuses to lighten the Heaviness of every Man's Guilt, (for *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida*) to plead any thing for their Excuse, they could not pretend Ignorance of our Saviour, or His Doctrine; and therefore it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, at the Day of Judgment, saith *Christ*, than for them. Indeed the Luxury, the Pride, the great Looseness, and the gross Idolatries of Tyre and Sidon, were scandalous Impieties, but the great Ignorance of their Duty, either total, or in part, may in some measure, abate the Wilfulness, and so far alleviate the Sinfulness of their Transgressions. The *Messiah* that was sent to be a *Light to lighten the Gentiles*, had not yet illuminated their Understandings, so that the Sins which they committed, were rather to be imputed to the blindness of their Understandings, than to any Obstinacy or Malice in their Wills: Wherefore some Excuses may be alledg'd, and with God's Mercy will be accepted, tho' not wholly to clear them, yet in some measure to lessen the Heinousness of their Guilt. But

*Chorazin.*

*Chorazin and Bethsaida*, that had been so clearly instructed in the full Extent of their Duty, and had been so often, and so earnestly urg'd to repent, both by the Terrible Threatnings, and by the Gracious Promises of our Saviour, as their Guilt was heavier so shall they be punish'd with greater Severity; for in their Unbelief and Impenitence, is imply'd not only a bare careless Neglect of our Saviour's Preaching, but a wilful Contempt of His Doctrine: In their Guilt is involv'd a perverse and malicious Resistance of the most powerful and convincing Motives that the *Infallible Truth himself* thought fit to bestow on Mankind; so that *it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the Day of Judgment than for them.*

If we abstract from the particular Circumstances of the Text, the general Rule compriz'd in these Words, it will be as follows, *Viz.*

They who have greater Advantages and Opportunities of Knowing and Practising their Duty, if they wholly neglect, or grossly abuse those Opportunities and Advantages, their Guilt will be the Heavier, and their Punishment will be more severe at the great Day of Judgment.

Which Universal Rule, that I may adapt to the present occasion, give me leave to speak of these three Heads. Of

I. The Advantages of knowing and doing our Duty, that we have from a Learned and a Religious Education.

II. Of the Obligation that lies on us of using these Advantages faithfully, as also how they should be used, and how they are liable often to be abus'd.

III. I will represent to you in what respects it will be more intolerable for them, (than for others

in the Day of Judgment) that neglect or abuse these Advantages.

By Dr. A-  
dams, upon  
Matt. 25.  
30. 1702.

I am sensible you have been entertain'd lately on this occasion with a Subject much like this, but I am very willing to hope since the end of Preaching is to put you in mind of what you already know, and most other Topicks of Discourse are in a manner Exhausted, that tho' what has been already said exceeds whatever I am able to do, yet that I may contribute something towards answering the design of this our Anniversary Meeting.

I. I will speak of the Advantages of a Learned Education. Now these Advantages of Learning being so many, and they having been so frequently and so fully handled: I shall not at present tire your Patience with a detale of them, but shall only refresh your Memories with some few Instances thereof.

I. Learning and Knowledge fill the Soul with content, and solid delight, for the rational part of our Nature is endu'd with strong and restless desires after Truth, and consequently the satisfaction of these desires is attended with Content and Pleasure. Knowledge makes the mind of Man easy, because it discovers and dispels the scruples that Error, and Ignorance occasion, which Scruples and Irresolutions being confessedly uneasy, the removal of them, the confident assurance that we act safely, when we act sincerely, the preventing those groundless fears, that Ignorance like a Dark Night raises in tender Consciences; all these together never fail to give solid ease, and undisturb'd rest to the minds of Men.

II. Learning Purifies, Encreases, and Strengthens our Natural Abilities; like as a sum of Money put to use, in a short time gives a strange increase; or as the

the faculties of the Body are improv'd, and strengthen'd by daily Exercise to act more readily and vigorously than they could otherwise do, if they were actuated only by the single strength of unpractis'd Nature, so the Spiritual Powers of the Soul will be exceedingly improv'd, and wonderfully strengthen'd with Study and Learning, which Truth is so strongly attested by *your abundant experience*, that it needs no other Confirmation.

III. Learning lets a Man into that vast Fund, that inestimable Treasure of Antient Knowledge, particularly it enables a Man to convert to his own use all the Wise Counsels, all the Sage Sentences, and Illustrious Examples of the *Greeks* and *Romans*, two Nations most Eminent for Knowledge, Wisdom, and strict Virtue.

How many Heroick Examples of Temperance, Chastity, Humility, Self-denial, exact Justice, Patience in Adversity, Contempt of the World, Mortifying their Passions, nay of Zeal for Religion too, (tho' falsely inform'd) and of a faithful care of the Publick Good? In a Word, what a Cloud of Philosophers, Statesmen, and Soldiers, both the Greek and Roman Histories furnish us with? All which are of no use to the Ignorant and Illiterate.

IV. Learning Faithfully, and Humbly employ'd, prepares Men for the belief of a Deity, (for true Philosophy and Atheism are Incompatible) It disposeth them to Acknowledge, depend on, and submit to an All Wise Providence; from the Natural apprehensions and notices of a Divine Nature, It inclines a Man to frame his Soul to a Religious Temper, It Demonstrates the necessity of a Divine Revelation, in order to Know, and Conform to the Holy Will of our Supreme Lawgiver.

To

To what a height, above the Vulgar, did the Antient Philosophers soar, by the sole Benefit of *Study* and *Learning*? From hence came the many Excellent Lessons of Heathen Morality, and certain it is, that Heathen Morality prepar'd the way to Christianity; nor could it be difficult to introduce so excellent a Religion among Learned and Religious Men, who were beforehand tir'd with the *Tales of Elizium*, and Nau-seated the *lewd Amours of their Gods*. And therefore many of the Fathers of the Christian Church, were of the Rhetoricians and Philosophers, as *Clemens, Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Tertullian, Origen, Lactantius*, and divers others.

V. As Learning and Knowledge are the Foundation upon which Religion is to be Erected, so they secure us from all Imaginary Draughts, or false Schemes thereof, of which there are Sundry Extant at this Day. And the Depraving the Understanding, the Leading faculty of the Soul, is in some Respects more dangerous than a Debauching of the Will, for the latter is a necessary Consequence from the former, the Will always following the last dictate of the Understanding; therefore if our Judgment and Understanding be not right, as to matters of Religion; Our Will, as to matters of Practice, must be Corrupt likewise. Thus fatal is Ignorance in the necessary points of Religion: and moreover, when the Minds of Young People are once tinctur'd with wrong notions of Religion, our experience tells us, how almost impossible it is to set 'em right: We may use the *Prophet Jeremy's word*, with a little variation, *Can the Ethiopian change his Skin, or the Leopard his Spots?* then may we hope to Correct the Mistakes, and Reform the Prejudices of a perverted Understanding; Of what

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inestimable Advantage then is it to be grounded and settl'd on such Principles, as will secure us from those Errors, which fill the Mind with dark and confus'd Notions of Religion, which seldom fail as to disturb the Peace and Quiet of those Minds that imbibe them, so likewise the Peace and Quiet of Church and State?

As for instance, The Doctrines of final Election, and Reprobation (as they are crudely taught) which suppose God to be partial in his Favours, and unjust in his Punishments, to be fond of a few, and to damn all the rest of his Creatures out of Humour and Fancy: The One encourages the sanguine Sinner to take no Care to improve those Means and Helps which God has vouchsafed him, but to magnify the Riches of his partial Grace, and wholly to acquiesce in it.

By the Other, many upon the same supposition are carried to Despair, concluding all their Endeavours after Happiness, will be in vain, and therefore abandon themselves to Sloth and Sensuality. To what can such absurd Notions of the Deity be imputed, so highly injurious to the infinite Goodness of God, without any Pretence or Colour of Scripture or Reason, nay, against all clear, plain, distinct Affirmations of both, and which are so great a hindrance to good Living, and tend so much to the Nourishment and Encrease of Sin: To what can these be imputed, but to downright Ignorance, or to such an *Education* as is worse than Ignorance?

Upon what but the want of good Education, can be charg'd those weak Scruples which some have entertain'd concerning the innocent Ceremonies and Usages of our Establish'd Church? Who that have been Taught to Reason fairly, and impartially, can ever be offended at the Use of those Things that are good

good in themselves, because they have been us'd to bad Purposes by some sort of Men? No other Account certainly can be given of this, but that Men Adhere to those first Impressions that are made upon 'em by their Masters, and Instructors, without giving themselves the trouble to consider and review them; and these Prejudices by Custom and long Acquaintance with our Souls, get a Mighty Interest, and shut them up against every Thing that is different from those Images of Education: *These Infusions* pass, as 'twere, into the very Substance of the Mind, and are apply'd to on all Occasions, as Unsophisticated Truths.

*We* therefore gratefully Acknowledge that *We* have been well Grounded in the Essentials of Religion, have been Taught chiefly the Matters of greatest Importance, yet so as not to despise Things of lesser Moment.

VI. Learning by the Powerful Charms of its Rhetorick, is useful to perswade many Sinners to accept of their own Salvation. Especially it is absolutely necessary to understand the Original Languages of Scripture, and the difficult Texts thereof; and therefore, I hope, *We of the Clergy*, shall never be discourag'd from the constant Use of *It*, by the Wild Pretenders to Enthusiasm, unless these last can, by the Unquestionable Authority of Miracles, demonstrate (as the Apostles did) the extraordinary Assistance of the Holy Ghost.

VII. Learning is of no less Advantage to unveil the Allegories of Holy Scripture, to discover the Excellent Wisdom in the Ceremonies of the Law, to understand its Tropes and Metaphors, how far they safely conclude, and where they begin to fail; to  
know

know when to Reject the *Letter*, that we may the better maintain the *Sense*, and where the *Letter* must take place of what *appears* to be the *Sense*; i. e. to know what is to be taken in the *Letter*, what in the *Mystery*, what *Plainly*, what in a *Figure*.

VIII. Once more Learning is very necessary in this Contentious, and Disputing Age, to Exercise our Reason, that we may clearly lay open the subtle fallacies of our Adversaries, that we may acutely and satisfactorily Refute their groundless Cavils, that we may solidly defend the sound Doctrines, the sober Rites, and moderate Discipline of our Excellent Church, against all our Enemies round about Us.

To these Advantages of a Learned, let me subjoin those of a Virtuous, and a Religious Education, which on *this Occasion* may be very seasonably insisted on, because it was *Our Great Happiness*, that *Our Masters and Instructors*, took Extraordinary Care, constantly to train us up in the strict Rules and Practice of Vertue; and also season'd Us betimes with the *Principles*, and *Worship* of the *Loyal Orthodox Church of England*.

I. The first Advantage of a Virtuous and Religious Education, is, that *It* takes the first Seisin, and Possession of Our Souls, before they be tainted with Sinful Practices, or Poison'd with vitious Habits; before they be blinded, or bias'd with violent Prejudices arising from bad Education, Wicked Company, or Evil Customs; from the popular Epidemical Opinions of a Party, or from the Debauchery and Atheism of this present Age. This early seasoning of the Soul with Virtue and Religion, is a vast benefit, for it not only fills the Mind with good Principles, but gives the Soul an Early Relish of the

Sweetness of Virtue and Religion, so that the strong Man within, being thus Guarded and Fortified, by his own Watchfulness and God's Assistance, may more easily keep the Grand Enemy from breaking in, and taking possession of our Souls, to our utter Ruin.

2. A second Advantage of an Early Religious Education, is, the sooner we enter upon Virtue, and Religion, the greater Progress are we likely to make in it, for Grace is of an encreasing Nature, and will Rise to a mighty Height, if *It* has a good Soil, and time enough to Grow in.

3. A third Advantage is from the Habits of Virtue, and Religion, that *It* constantly produceth.

You are not to be told of the strong Influence of Custom, and Habit; you all see it in others, you feel it in your selves, so that if Children by the Pious Education of their Teachers, are fram'd, and fashion'd to a Habit of Piety, 'tis to be hop'd that by the Concurrence of God's Renewing Grace they will be able, without much difficulty, to put off the *Old Man*, and put on the *New*; and those well Rooted Habits of Early Piety, will in the future Course of their Lives, be of vast use to hinder the Practice of Opposite Sins, and also to lead them gently and pleasantly into the easy and delightful Practise of their Duty.

Such, you Gentlemen See, and Feel, are the Advantages of a Good Education, for we must all thankfully Acknowledge, that we have been surrounded with Engagements of all sorts towards the Attainment of these *Two*, the greatest Accomplishments of Humane Nature, Virtue, and Learning. As for Learning we were not only put into a sure way to

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Acquire *It*, by the instruction of our Masters, but we had also the Light of Examples, and the Heat of Emulation, a Sense of Honour, Fear of Punishment, and Hope of Rewards, to work on our different Passions, and Tempers, so that it is hard for *Us* in *such a Place* to find a pretence for Sloth and Idleness: In like manner, as to Virtue, as a *Bad Education*, or *none* at all, makes it impossible for *Youth* to be Good, so a *Good one* very difficult to be *Bad*.

Thus we came out of *Our Masters Hands*, and what may not the World expect from such Beginnings? Who can but presage some great and useful things from Youth, whose manners have been so form'd, upon whom so much Care and Pains have been bestow'd? If any of us prove not *True Sons* of the *Church*, and *Obedient Subjects* to the *State*, it must be owing one would think to a kind of Fatality; for we have no naughty Principles to Unlearn, nothing to do, but to go on and improve the good ones we began with.

These are some of the Advantages of a Learned and Religious Education.

On the contrary. 'Tis a question, were it not for Education, whether there would be much difference betwixt Rational and Irrational Creatures; because without *That* there is no way of preserving the Dignity of Our Nature, as Reasonable Creatures, nor have we much more besides our outward shape and figure, to distinguish Us from the Brute part of Creation, being destitute of those Accomplishments of the Mind, which principally conduce to that End.

The Husbandman expects not a Crop meerly because the Ground is his own, or he hires it, but from the Tillage, Manuring, and Cost he has bestow'd upon it: And it would be as unreasonable to expect that Youth should of themselves take their own Lessons, Learn their Duty towards God, and towards their Neighbour, when they were never Taught what either of them means: We may as well expect, that the Horse should be broken naturally, and of himself, to the Rider's Hands, that he should take on his Burden with a Word, and have all his several Paces and Postures, tho' never Exercis'd therein: Or as Job speaks, (Chap. 39. 9.) *That the Unicorn will be willing to serve Thee, and abide by Thy Crib: Canst Thou bind the Unicorn with his Band in the Furrow? Or will he harrow the Valleys after Thee? Wilt Thou trust him because his Strength is great? Or wilt Thou leave Thy Labour to him? Wilt Thou believe him that he will bring Home Thy Seed, and gather it into thy Barn?* This is altogether as likely, as that Youth, when a streight and broad Way, right Paths, and crooked Turnings, are indifferently propos'd to 'em, should, of themselves, take the best; and tho' raw and unexperienc'd, choose what is most convenient: No, 'tis not to be wondred at, if in such a Case (where All is trusted to Chance,) they take the Wrong rather than the Right Course. Neither is it more a Wonder to see those who have been destitute of Education, who have had no Instruction, and have been under no Government in their Younger Years; to see the Lives of such soon stain'd with Vices above their Age, to see 'em begin betimes to practise all the Villanies of Youth, and imitate the Vices of Men; for the Natural Weeds of Looseness and Unsettledness,

ness, of Levity and Carelessness, of Pride and conceitedness, and all other irregular Passions; without Cultivating, will grow too fast in their Souls; and that the more plentifully by how much the Soil is the Richer, the Ingenuity more pregnant, and the Parts of a finer Mould: But when once these are rooted up by a Vertuous Education, and we go on orderly from one thing to another, and are led by Degrees and Steps, from Things that are clear, distinct, and perspicuous, to what is more obscure and intricate, from Elements and Principles, to Conclusions and Deductions, from the Rudiments and Catechetical Doctrines, to deeper Mysteries; and Knowledge, and Conscience, are the Governing Principles within us; then which way soever Our Country calls for Our Services, whether We are engag'd in a Contemplative Life, or have Variety of Affairs to transact, I shall not scruple, without Fear of being suspected of too much Partiality for the *Place of Our Education*, to Affirm, that unless We break loose from those good Instructions which were then instill'd into *Us*, that the very meanest amongst *Us*, (tho' Our Employments be not High and Honourable,) may be very serviceable to the Church and State: As in a Curious Piece of Workmanship every Part can't be the Prime Wheel, nor yet the Spring of the whole Motion, yet the least Pin, and most inconsiderable Tack, serve not only to the Strength and Use, but also the Beauty and Ornament of the Whole: For to be taught to live orderly, and to be diligent and industrious in their respective Employments, this will not only advance Men's own Credit, but render them a publick Blessing to their Country.

And such is the Wisdom of *our Instructors*, that They consider the Tempers and Dispositions of the Youth

From \* E-  
ton-College  
to † King's  
in Cam-  
bridge.

Youth committed to their Care, and never encourage Parents to force Nature, or to offer Violence to the *Genius* of their Children: Where they find Parts and Abilities, no Labour and Pains are spar'd to improve the Powers, and Faculties, and Understandings of such, as they may answer the Ends of their being sent thither: And they who seem by Nature and Constitution to be fitted for some other Business, even with respect to *such*, the Advantage of a Publick Education is very great, for, generally speaking, *there* is soonest discovered the Bent and Inclinations of our several Tempers; so whether we are transplanted from *one* \* *Seminary* to the † *other*, or are diverted to any other Employment, we are generally apply'd to what best suits us; and accordingly (by God's Blessing) thrive and do well in the World, as is abundantly evident from the noble Appearance of this Day. All Youth are not design'd to be Scholars, to be great Philosophers, or Orators, and yet being applyed to that Profession that did best agree with them, have been altogether as useful to the Publick; for he that labours at the Oar, and tuggs at the Rudder, is in his Place as serviceable to the Motion of the Ship, as he that sits at the Helm and steers her Course.

Now if it be of such Advantage to the Publick to have all Persons set to that Course of Life for which God, Nature, and Divine Providence may seem more especially to have design'd them; then this is generally the Effect of a Publick Education: If Parents will take the Advice of *such Wise Instructors*, they may soon put their Children to that proper way in which they will go on with Profit and Delight; whereas Youth, if they are not put into a right Course at first, no wonder if they ever after go dully on,

on, and drive heartily when 'tis against the Grain, and up Hill. *Bodies*, when out of their proper Places, move with great Disorder and Irregularity, but when in them, with Ease and Facility; and *Wits*, and *Souls* too, follow much the same Laws, effect Great and Noble Things, when directed to their proper Objects with Pleasure; but if their Natural Course be diverted, they either become Idle and Lazy, and, as 'twere, stand still, or, which is worse, Turbulent and Factious: Like Waters, which if hindered from running in their proper Channel, either stand, and so corrupt and putrify, or break their Banks, causing an Inundation, and lay the Neighbouring Places desolate.

II. I proceed to speak of the Obligation that lies upon *Us* to use these Advantages faithfully: As also to shew how they should be Us'd, and how they are liable too often to be Abus'd.

i. The Obligation to Use these Advantages ariseth from the Nature of them; they are Improvements of *Your Abilities* into *Habits*, which *Habits*, in their very Notion, imply a readiness and inclination to Exercise and Use these very *Powers* and *Abilities*.

These Improvements are granted you by the Gracious Giver of all Good things for this very end, that they may, and are to be employ'd; for the *Manifestation of the Spirit is given to every Man to profit withal*: All Gifts of the Spirit, Ordinary or Extraordinary, Natural, Acquir'd, or Infus'd (*for the Text there makes no difference*) must be Us'd to profit Our Selves, and to be helpful to Others: If therefore *We* do not employ these Advantages, *We* highly offend God, by perverting the only End of His bestowing them upon us, we basely betray our  
Trust,

Trust, we are false to the Confidence repos'd in us, and how unworthy is it of generous Tempers to be guilty of such Baseness and Ingratitude. We are also oblig'd to use these advantages, that as many of them were procur'd by Use and Exercise, so they may, by the like Practice, be improv'd and brighten'd.

2. We are oblig'd to use these Advantages, for Knowledge ought to be communicative, because it resembles Light, which is given, not only to lighten our selves, but to illuminate others: 'Tis the utmost Folly to light a Candle in order to put it under a Bushel: 'Tis almost naturally impossible to hinder a Lucid Body from diffusing its communicative Rays to a vast distance; Let therefore *Your Knowledge*, i. e. *Your Light so shine before Men, that they may glorify your Father who is in Heaven.*

3. We are oblig'd carefully to make use of these Advantages, because if we make not the best use of these Advantages, they will of themselves insensibly decay, for it is but reason, that what is gotten by Practice, should be impair'd and lost by its contrary. Some early Blossoms, which rais'd a great expectation of rare perfection, have suddenly decay'd and insensibly wither'd away, by not being cherish'd and improv'd by diligence.

Not only Vice but Vertue stands on a steep slippery Precipice; if you do not earnestly endeavour to Climb upwards, you must of necessity slide downwards; if we, like the slothful Servant in the Gospel, lazily wrap up our Talent in a Napkin, we must expect the same Treatment from our Just Master; i. e. to have all that we have taken away from us.

And

And if we make not a due use of these great advantages, our account will be heavier at the great Day of Accounts; for of them that have receiv'd much, much will be requir'd. Persons highly Eminent for Learning and Wisdom, Men endu'd with great Power, are more than others oblig'd to employ these to the Publick Good.

But I shall remit the consideration of this last to the third General Head.

I proceed therefore to instance in some Particulars, how these Advantages should be us'd.

1. And first we must thankfully Acknowledge that they all are Originally deriv'd from God, the inexhausted Fountain of all Knowledge: What hast thou which thou hast not receiv'd? *Your Natural Parts, your Industry* to improve these, the skill and care of good Masters to direct and constrain you to exercise your Natural Abilities, All are the *second Causes* and Means by which God the *first Universal Cause* freely bestows on you these Advantages; He divideth His Graces severally to every Man as he will: Altho' many of you shine as Stars of the first Magnitude, yet pray Humbly Reflect that you shine but with borrow'd Light, borrow'd from the Father of Lights, thankfully therefore bless the goodness and bounty of the Donor, and gratefully return him his own, by employing your Abilities only, and wholly to His Glory.

2. Let us also in due order make suitable returns, of Respect and Honour to those Learned Persons whom the Almighty goodness has rais'd up, and enabled to be the Instruments of conveying these Advantages to us.

It has been question'd by some whether they were not as much oblig'd to those that gave them Education, as to those that gave them Being. *Alexander the Great* made Ampler Acknowledgements of His Obligations to His Tutor *Aristotle*, than to *Philip* His Father. What Honours did the Emperor *Trajan* heap upon *Plutarch* for those good Lectures He read to Him? The Emperor *Gratian* made His Tutor *Aufonius* Consul.

These Examples may easily convince Us, that the most Generous and Noble Spirits have always set the greatest value upon those who were the Instructors and Guides of their Youth.

'Tis not only the business of the Sons of *Levi* (tho' their's especially) to Enlighten the Ignorant, to Instruct and Lead the Wanderer into the right Way; but all who have made a good proficiency in Learning (whatever their Profession be) must be sure to use it to the Honour of God and Religion, in answering the Objections, and refuting the Arguments of our many Adversaries. Your Learning and Abilities therefore must be employ'd in an open War against Schism, Heresy, Idolatry, Scepticism, and Atheism. Your Oratory, *Gentlemen*, should be us'd to persuade; Your Authority, Your Examples to Influence Your Inferiours, and Admirers, to be Orthodox in persuasion, and Holy in all manner of Conversation.

'Tis good to be *always* Zealously Affected in a good Cause: 'Tis good Courageously *now* to stand in the Gap to oppose with your utmost endeavours this Mighty Torrent of Prophaneness and Faction, which pour upon Us like a sweeping Land Flood, to destroy Our Church and Nation.

Now

Now All Good Men should say, as *Moses* did; Who is on the Lord's side? Who? and Evidence by their Learning, (if they are able) at least by their Lives, that they are on the Lord's side, and on the Lord's Anointed's side, and endeavour to deliver both Church and State, as well from the subtle Underminings, as the Publick Assaults of all their Enemies.

I shall say no more at present, how the Advantages of *Your Education* are to be employ'd; because I hasten to instance in some Abuses, to which the Advantages of a Learned Education are often lyable.

1. And first, not to urge that the Non Use of *These* is an Abuse: For where the Parts of a Division admit of no third Thing, the Absence of the One, infers the Presence of the Other: As in the Case of Virtue and Religion, there is no midway, no Neutrality, no halting betwixt *Christ* and *Belial*; He that is not Virtuous must be Vitious; So he that neglects to Use *These* Advantages, Abuseth them.

2. A Greater Abuse of Learning and Knowledge, is to be Proud of *Them*, and because of *Them* to scorn Your more Ignorant Brethren. Knowledge puffeth up: As Knowledge enlargeth the Mind, so 'tis apt to swell it also; they that excel others in Knowledge, too often, in their own Conceits, exalt themselves above others. Even *St. Paul himself* was in danger of being puff'd up with *Abundant Revelations*. (2 Cor. 12. 7.) To depress therefore this Haughtiness, consider, that Pride and Arrogance is a grievous Offence, and Affront to God Himself, who hates, and always sets Himself against the Proud. Reflect, that Humility, on the other side, is highly pleasing to God and Man: Remember, that God bestows on you

these things freely, without any Merit of them on your parts: Remember, He graciously continues them so long as You faithfully Use them, but upon Your Neglect of them, much more on Your gross Abuse of them, will He finally withdraw them.

'Tis observable, that the great Fault of the Proud *Pharisee*, which Our Saviour reproveth, was not only because he vaunted of those Qualities, which God had bestow'd on him, but chiefly because he arrogantly thank'd God that he was not as bad as that Humble *Publican*.

3. Another Abuse of Learning is, for the Love of a Party to employ It to espouse and propagate Rebellious Tenets, to invent and maintain new Maxims and Schemes of Government. This Grand Abuse of Parts and Learning is very seasonable to be caution'd against *Now*, when 'tis so fashionable to imbebe, and disperse the Chimerical Principles of an *Hobbesian State of Nature*: *Now* when 'tis so modish to justify the Resistance of Magistrates: *Now* when 'tis so popular to defend and improve the Principles of the late horrid Rebellion; and 'tis so great a piece of Wit to make a Mock of Sin, to make a Jest of *Murdering a most Excellent King* in Satyrical Rhimes, and Scoundrel Ballads, Yearly Sung at the *Solemn Anniversary of the Calves-Head Club*.

4. Another Abuse of *Learning* is very Epidemical, *viz.* to employ It in advancing Scepticism, to exalt Our Reason against God, to pretend to fathom and explain the Mystery of the Holy Trinity, and other Great Articles of our Christian Faith: To Reject and Expose all those Articles which our shallow Reason cannot comprehend: Of which last, I cannot but observe, that if it be laid down as a Rule, we must

must not believe any thing till the Nature and Manner of its Being be fully comprehended; Thence it will follow, that the most obvious Effects of Nature must not be believed; and also, that the more Ignorant any Man is, the more Reason has he to reject any Point of Religion that is propounded to his Assent.

*Laertius* reports of *Thales*, that whilst he was very seriously looking up to Heaven, to behold the Course of the Stars, he fell into a Ditch; upon which a Woman of his Family sharply, but wittily derided him, saying, How, O *Thales*, supposest Thou to know what is done in Heaven, when τὰ ἐν οὐρανῷ ὑπερβαίνει τὰ ἐν γῇ, Thou canst not see what is before thy Feet?

The last Abuse that I shall mention, to which great Parts and Improvements are most lyable, is that spreading dangerous *Itch* of being *Witty*. Wit, well govern'd, and well employ'd, is highly serviceable to many noble Ends and Purposes; It will season Conversation, It will expose and ridicule the absurd Objections, and trifling Arguments of the Enemies of Religion; but it is with that, as with other sharp things, 'tis dangerous to jest too often with them. Of this Modern Intemperate Abuse of Wit, we may observe, that it is always uneasie to the Company where it is exorbitantly vented; and it is dangerous to the Parties themselves that vent it; for it makes the deepest and most lasting Impressions in the Memories of the Persons affronted by it, and provokes them to revenge it most severely: It is an unjust Quality, because it wrongs our Neighbour in his most valuable Treasure, his good Name; and it unfairly wrests every thing to the worst Sense; 'Tis unnatural'd, 'tis uncharitable; for It doth not cover, but exposeth

exposeth a Multitude of Faults; It doth not only think Evil, but It speaks the worst It can think of; 'Tis Sawcy and Impudent, for It boldly Assumes a Superiority over Our Friends, Magistrates, the Government, over Vertue, nay, over God and Religion also. 'Tis a Quality the Wise Antient Nations, the *Greeks* and the *Romans*, had a mean Opinion of; for the *Greeks* express'd it by Words that import Scurri- lity, Sacrilegious Prophaneness, and Ridicule, \* *Copu- Xenoph. in* *κωλία*, and † *πυκρόθυτα*, but the *Romans* call'd It by *Symp.* a Word implying Talkativeness and Buffoonry. Truly, if it is seriously consider'd, these perpetual Wits are no better than those *distinguish'd Officers*, who, from their Stages, gather and entertain the Multi- tude; of which the Wisdom and Gravity of Our An- cestors was so sensible, that Antiently Men of Es- tates and Quality maintain'd a *Natural* or *Artificial Fool* in their Houses, to make Sport for the Family, at a much cheaper and more reputable Rate, than Now the Heirs of their Estates and Honours execute the same low Office themselves, to the Neglect of their Estates, the diminishing their Reputation, and many times, to the loss of their Souls.

III. I come, in the last place, to shew why, and how it will be more intolerable in the Day of Judg- ment for them that Neglect or Abuse these Advan- tages.

Which will appear

I. Because their Unthankfulness, their Unfaith- fulness, their wretched Carelessness, in the Neglect or Abuse of these Advantages, are greater than other Mens. He that is wholly Ignorant, possibly may be excus'd; But he that knows his Master's Will, and doth it not, shall be beaten with many Stripes. God's infinite

infinite Knowledge clearly beholds the Guilt of every Man's Sin, and his perfect Justice will punish every Man according to the Weight and Malice of his Transgressions. Now the Malice and Obstinacy of *Their* Wills exceed that of the Ignorant and Illiterate; there is a more free Consent of the Will that goes to a knowing Man's Iniquity, he is more wittingly and willingly hurry'd away by Pleasure, Interest, or Ambition to Abuse these Advantages, all which are the most aggravating Circumstances of any Transgression; therefore the Punishment of such Persons will be more heavy. Farther, Their Case and Condition will be more intolerable at the Day of Judgment, because nothing can be said in excuse for them, for nothing can be offer'd to excuse a Sinner, but what will make his Iniquity to appear less sinful: Now the Reason of the Wickedness of any Action ariseth from the free Consent and Malice of the Will, but if Weakness, or want of due information in the Understanding, either overpowers, or doth not duly inform the Will, so that it cannot freely consent to the Action, so far is the Sinfulness abated, and so far is the Action excusable. But Weakness will be but a poor Excuse for them who have had such Abilities; and Ignorance can with as little Modesty be alledg'd for those who have had so many Advantages and Opportunities of knowing their Duty.

2. Their Punishment will be made more heavy for the Sins of other Persons, *viz.* for so many of them, as Learned Persons, either by their Perswasion, their Authority, or Examples, have in any wise occasion'd, or instigated their Unlearned Inferiors to commit: Nay, the Upbraidings and Revilings of these poor Wretches, whom the Abusers of Learning  
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and Knowledge have misguided, or betray'd to those dismal Regions of Torment, shall be in Hell a sharp Addition to a Learned Man's Misery.

3. *Lastly*, They who Abuse their Abilities shall find, that their Punishment will be made more intolerable by that very Knowledge which they have so fatally abus'd. The greatest of Miseries is the Misery of Our Superior Nature, *i. e.* of Our Minds and Consciences: Thus in this Life we experience, that the Anguish and Torment of our Minds is exceeding more sharp and pungent than the acutest Pains of the Body; therefore, in the future Misery of impenitent Sinners, the Sting of Conscience, the Worm that never dies, the acute Sense and Shame of Sin, the perpetual Anguish, and the intolerable Load of Despair; these are, in all probability, the heaviest and sharpest Circumstances of a Sinner's Torment; which, if so, then the more any Wretch's Knowledge is Encreas'd, but Abus'd, the more are all these dreadful Circumstances of his Torment aggravated: And thus his Punishment becomes more heavy and Intolerable.

Thus have I done with the Three Heads I propos'd to speak of.

I shall draw an Inference or two from what I have said, and so conclude.

1. If *We* faithfully employ the Advantages of *Our Happy Education*, then We shall not only answer the End of this *Solemn Meeting*, and most advance the Interest and Honour of *That School* wherein We were brought up, and render Our Selves, in Our several Stations, most serviceable to Church and State, but We shall have the less Load of Guilt lie  
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on our Consciences, We shall have a lighter Account to give up at the Great General Audit, and consequently have less Reason to dread the Severity of Our Impartial Judge.

2. We may infer, on the other hand, that if We bury Our Talents, and take no Care to improve Our Stock; if We carelessly neglect, if We prodigally squander, if We maliciously Abuse these Great Advantages, We shall have an heavier Reckoning to make up before Our Exact Almighty Judge, and shall have the less to alledge for Our Selves at the great Day of Judgment: Nay, *it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at that Day than for Us.*

God has given to all Men sufficient Means and Grace to serve him acceptably, and to put themselves in a Capacity of Salvation; to all those, I mean, who are capable of Reason and Understanding, and therefore, Natural Ideots, and Lunaticks, whilst in that Condition, are excluded from rendring any Account, for our Saviour exacts *One* only from those who share in his Talents; for which Reason St. Paul saith Rom. 1. 20. that the *very Heathens are left without Excuse.* God has not shew'd himself so severe a Task-Master, to require Brick without finding Straw, but has graciously supplied all Mankind with Materials to work out their Salvation; tho' He distributes not to all Men an equal share of His Grace, and Favours; Nor equal Advantages in managing them, yet He is liberal enough to all, according to their Abilities, and even upon the meanest bestows a *Talent*; where 'tis not amiss to observe, that a *Talent* was the highest Summ of Money the *Jews* ever had amongst 'em, or made use of; so that he that had least, had a large Competency allow'd him to manage and improve.

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The *Heathens*, for instance, to whom God vouchsafed only *One Talent*, viz. the Natural Light of Reason and Conscience; tho' He will not require so much of *Them*, as of the most Ignorant Christian, yet He will require of *Them* what is agreeable to the Dignity, or apparently the Duty of a Rational Creature; but not amongst *These* neither, an equal Improvement of *This One Talent*, but only according to *Their* Capacities, according to *Their* Leisure and Abilities.

Men of Sagacity and Learning, of singular Parts and Endowments, such as *Plato*, *Aristotle*, *Tully*, and *Seneca*, no doubt, will find more expected of them, (Lives more suitable to the Nature of the Deity, and the Excellency of Morality) than of the Ignorant and Unlearn'd amongst *Them*: So, most certainly, will it fare with *Us Christians*; God will not expect from the Ignorant and Illiterate amongst *Us*, such Advancements in Christianity, as from *Those* who have been bless'd with all the Means of improving their Faculties to the Service of God and Religion.

They, therefore, who improve their *Talents*, as 'tis to be hop'd *You* already have, (and will daily more and more) what a vast Return will *They* bring, both in this World, and in that which is to come.

Your Bounteous Master, to *You* that have gained *Ten Talents*, will double *Your Stock*, and make *You Rulers over Ten Cities*. There are different Degrees of Glory and Happiness in the next World; and Our Reward from God will be in exact proportion to Our different Attainments in Vertue here: And who knows what an Addition of Glory in Heaven is?

But

But before I finish, I must not forget one of the main Ends of Our Meeting, which is to promote Charity, to do all the good Offices We can to One Another. Our Charity, indeed, ought to be general and unlimited; None ought to be excluded from it, but yet some may claim the Preference before others, especially to Our Bounty this Day. I plead *now*, not for Common Charity, nor for Common Beggars, but for a more than ordinary Liberality to Our Indigent Schoolfellows: Nor am I an Advocate for those, who by their Sloth and Idleness have brought Poverty upon themselves, who remain useless under such Means of Improvement, and consequently are a Reproach and Dishonour to the Place of their *Education*; but for those only who have been Diligent and Industrious, and yet by some Providential Dispensations, are reduc'd to Streights and Exigencies. Can *We*, *We* especially, who owe Our *Education*, and the Blessed Effects of it to the Bounty of Our Royal Founder Henry VI. be so Unnatural as to deny Our Help and Assistance to those who have suck'd in the Principles of Knowledge and Religion, from the *same Mother*? *Who* set out in the World as well furnish'd and accomplish'd as Our Selves, with all useful and necessary Literature, tho' they have met with different Success? If there be any such amongst *Us*, whose only Fault is to be Unfortunate, what a Noble Piece of Charity would it be to Recover such into a Capacity of being Useful and Serviceable to the World?

Eton Coll.

Or to furnish some *Poor Scholars* in either of the \**Two Colleges*, (whose Parents are unable) with some necessary Books? For what Pity is it that any should be discourag'd for want of proper Materials, or be suffer'd

\**Eton and Kings in Cambridge*

suffer'd to be barren, after so much Pains taken to make them fruitful in every good Work?

But I need not press *That* which *You* are so forward to do of Your Selves; for you very well know the only way to be Benevolent to Your Selves, is to be Beneficial to Others. To Conclude.

Now if it were of any Avail to address Our Selves to the Soul of *King Henry the Sixth*, for those Advantages We have had from *His two Royal and Religious Foundations*, I hope *We All* Agree, never was there more just Occasion, nor were ever Acknowledgments paid to the most Glorious Saints with greater Sincerity than *Ours* should be. But since that is neither needful, nor allowable, let Us apply Our Selves to God, the Common Benefactor of Us all, who doth most certainly Hear, and is most willing to Receive the Unfeigned Thanks of His Humble Servants, Beseeching Him to Accept the Praises which are offer'd to His Holy Name on this Account, and to continue to Us the Blessings which are the Causes of them.

*Now to God the Father, &c.*

**FINIS.**



